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New spy suspect may be copycat

By Sam Meddis
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A 26-year-old Washington, D.C., messenger faces arraignment on espionage charges today — perhaps the first "copycat" in The Year of the Spy, an expert said Sunday.

Randy Miles Jeffries — the 11th suspect netted this year — was arrested Friday and ac-

cused of trying to sell defense secrets to an undercover FBI agent for \$5,000.

Jeffries — who earned \$500 a month delivering congressional documents — joins a list of accused spies that includes CIA, National Security Agency and naval workers.

This time, media reports of the string of espionage cases may have encouraged a "copy-

cat" to believe there's easy money to be made in selling secrets to the Soviets, said John Greaney, director of the Association of Former Intelligence Officers.

Greaney said that after such intense publicity, people "come out of the woodwork."

Possible "copycat" signs: Jeffries' low job level and probable naiveté.

FBI spokesman Lane Bonner declined comment on any motive, but said the FBI has found "money is the common thread running through many of these recent cases."

Jeffries had worked two months as a messenger for the Acme Reporting Co., which transcribes secret House of Representatives sessions.

It's not clear why Jeffries — a former FBI clerk who was convicted of heroin possession in 1983 — was allowed access to secret documents.

Acme officials said their check with Washington police in November failed to turn up a record of the drug conviction.

The House Armed Services Committee says it will re-evaluate hiring practices to tighten security.